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Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraphs 9 and 10 of General Assembly resolution 52/5 of 22 October 1997.

II. Consultations and exchanges of information

2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS) continued their practice of meetings and consultations. During the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, the two Secretaries-General discussed the situation regarding the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Iraq and Algeria, as well as United Nations reform. During his visit to the Middle East in March 1997, the Secretary-General, while at Cairo, called on Mr. Esmat Abdel Maguid. The situation as regards Iraq, Somalia, the Comoros, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Lockerbie case, as well as the Middle East peace process, were among the topics addressed.

3. The Secretary-General convened a third high-level meeting between the United Nations and regional organizations at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 28 and 29 July 1998. The theme of the meeting was "Cooperation for conflict prevention". LAS was represented at that meeting by its Assistant Secretary-General for Political and International Affairs, Dr. Mohamed Zakaria Ismai.

4. The secretariats of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, as well as the Office of the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, have continued to maintain close contacts on matters of mutual concern to the two organizations.

5. A high-level LAS delegation visited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in March 1998 and exchanged views on UNCTAD activities related to the Arab world, particularly on trade information, debt management, international trade issues and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Intensive consultations between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and LAS were conducted at the level of the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States in UNDP and the Secretary-General of the League, as well as at the technical level. High-level contacts between the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and LAS included a meeting between the Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA and representatives of LAS host authorities at Cairo in July 1997; a meeting between the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and representatives of the LAS host authorities at Amman in September 1997; and a meeting between the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and the Secretary-General of LAS at Cairo in September 1997. In early 1998, a high-level team from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) visited the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to discuss co-financing opportunities.

III. Follow-up action on proposals agreed to at general meetings between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States

6. A summary of the reports of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system on their cooperation with the League of Arab States during the period under review is given below. It represents the follow-up action on proposals adopted at the United Nations-LAS meetings at Vienna in 1995 (A/50/496) and Geneva in 1997 (A/52/378).

A. United Nations Secretariat

1. Department of Public Information

7. The Radio and Central News Service produced three feature programmes in Arabic devoted exclusively to the position of the League of Arab States during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly and the international gatherings in support of the Palestinian people. Other radio news bulletins, current affairs and regional magazines dealt with various aspects of the work and activities of LAS, including the following: interviews with the LAS Secretary-General; two interviews with the Permanent Observer of LAS to the United Nations; coverage of the nineteenth ministerial session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held at Beirut; and coverage of a special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to observe the thirtieth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories. United Nations Radio/Geneva interviewed Mr. Said Kemal, Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, during an international non-governmental organization seminar on the question of Palestine held at Geneva.

8. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has intensified cooperation with the Documentation and Information Centre of the League of Arab States in Cairo, ensuring that the Centre regularly receives United Nations materials.

2. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

9. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the support of UNDP, has continued to execute a project on Administrative Development of the general secretariat of LAS. The project is aimed at strengthening the administration of LAS and modernizing its work procedures. More specifically, the project is expected to contribute to: the development of the organizational structure of the departments and units of the general secretariat; the development and application of work methods and procedures; the streamlining of the processing, storage and retrieval of data through assistance in the development, and installation and application of a management information system.

10. An independent evaluation team assessed the first phase of the project in November 1997. Negotiations between LAS, UNDP and the Department are under way to start a second phase of the project so that the recommendations and findings of the evaluation report can be implemented.

11. The Department has also been carrying out research and analysis in such areas of mutual interest as the advancement of women, youth matters, eradication of poverty, population and statistics. Substantive reports, analyses and other relevant material are available for exchange on a reciprocal basis.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

12. Collaboration continued with LAS, its specialized agencies and affiliated bodies within the context of the ESCWA programme of work, mainly through the preparation of reports and reciprocal participation in meetings and follow-up to global conferences. Specific examples of these activities are given below.

13. In 1998, collaborative efforts between ESCWA and LAS in terms of follow-up to global conferences have continued. The two organizations are co-sponsoring four regional preparatory meetings for the Arab conference on integrated follow-up to global conferences, scheduled for the biennium 1998–1999, namely, follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development; the World Summit for Social Development; the Fourth World Conference on Women; and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

14. Cooperation with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) was undertaken in the framework of ESCWA activities in community development, human development and poverty eradication. In addition, ESCWA attended the Second Symposium on Water Resources in the Arab World, organized by AFESD and the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) (Kuwait, 8–10 March 1997), and presented a paper on the subject.

15. ESCWA participated in the regional seminar on current and future prospects of urban food distribution systems in the Near East region (Beirut, 11–15 August 1997), where it presented a case study on urban food marketing in greater Amman. ESCWA cooperated with the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) to formulate strategies for sustainable human development in the Arab world. ESCWA and the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) co-sponsored a workshop on the theme "Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts" (Abu Dhabi, 7–17 June 1997).

16. ESCWA and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) have held annual coordination meetings to exchange views and identify activities of mutual interest. AOAD participated in the first session of the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources (Amman, 30 and 31 March 1997); and in an expert group meeting on water legislation (Amman, 24–26 November 1996). ESCWA also contributed to two training workshops organized by AOAD by delivering two lectures at a national training workshop on strengthening the role of women's organizations in rural development (Amman, May 1997) and a regional training workshop on the implementation and management of agricultural projects (Amman, July 1997).

17. ESCWA delivered four lectures at a workshop on groundwater protection in the Arab world organized by ACSAD and held at Amman from 6 to 10 December 1997. ESCWA and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) are cooperating in developing a network, AIDMO-TIES, for the transfer of technology. Moreover, ESCWA collaborated with AIDMO to issue a joint publication entitled "Bulletin of industrial statistics in the Arab countries".

C. United Nations Children's Fund

18. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the League of Arab States' Department of Childhood continued to work together very closely on issues of common concern through the Joint Committee. Over the course of the past year, some of the areas of cooperation have included co-sponsorship of and participation in a workshop at a conference of Arab businessmen held at Beirut in October 1997.

19. In the area of data collection and analysis, UNICEF has expressed its interest in continuing collaboration with the Pan Arab Project on Family Health (PAPFAM), the successor to the Pan-Arab Project on Maternal and Child Health (PAPCHILD). The main means of support would be through country offices, as well as through the UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa.

D. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

20. Regular consultations at both Cairo and Geneva have been taking place between the UNCTAD and LAS secretariats aimed at expanding cooperation between them for the benefit of Arab countries.

21. At the request of LAS, two representatives of UNCTAD made a presentation of the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) customs efficiency programme at the Customs Committee Meeting organized by LAS at Cairo from 19 to 21 May 1997. The main objective of UNCTAD's presentation was to create awareness in the Arab region of the ASYCUDA programme and its importance for modernization of customs procedures and management with a view to improving efficient clearance and effective revenue collection.

22. A second meeting of the Customs Committee was held in Alexandria from 3 to 8 November 1997. The meeting discussed a variety of issues related to trade facilitation in general and customs computerization in particular.

23. The above meetings were organized by the secretariat of LAS and were attended by high-level customs representatives from Arab States. The conclusions of the meetings clearly demonstrate that there is a distinct need for cooperation between customs administrations in the Arab region, especially on coordination and computerization. At the second meeting, UNCTAD tabled a discussion paper with a proposal for closer cooperation on customs modernization, ASYCUDA, trade facilitation and the establishment of a permanent customs committee. The proposal needs to be further developed, and is currently being considered in the LAS secretariat.

24. At the OAU/LAS Third Afro-Arab Trade Fair, which took place at Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, from 6 to 12 December 1997, an UNCTAD expert participated in the preparatory committee and assisted in formulating a programme for the cooperation forum, particularly on issues related to the Arab world, WTO and international trade issues. Six UNCTAD experts assisted in conducting the cooperation forum and acted as resource persons. Representatives of all Arab countries and some African countries attended the meeting, which was chaired by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and LAS secretariats. An UNCTAD stand was set up, and relevant UNCTAD documentation was displayed. A large number of participants, most from Arab countries and some at the ministerial level, visited the stand and held substantive consultations with UNCTAD staff on trade issues.

25. In cooperation with UNDP, UNCTAD is implementing a programme of technical assistance for the benefit of Arab countries on a regional, subregional and national basis, focused particularly on investment, trade efficiency and the challenges of integration of the Arab countries into a multilateral, regional and interregional trading system.

E. United Nations Development Programme

26. Cooperation between UNDP and LAS takes place at two levels: at the level of direct contacts and cooperation with the secretariat of the League and at the level of regional and country-specific cooperation with the Arab States members of the League.

27. With regard to the former, during the period under review agreements have been reached about the content of the cooperation agreement between UNDP and LAS, and about shifting the nature of future collaboration between the two organizations from UNDP support for restructuring of the secretariat of the League to joint activities aimed at strengthening the environment for sustainable human development in the Arab region.

F. United Nations Environment Programme

28. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has continued to implement project activities, together with LAS and its specialized organizations, in the following main areas: (a) combating desertification and increasing green

areas; (b) combating industrial pollution; (c) environmental education, awareness and information; (d) conservation of biological diversity; (e) establishment of a network of environmental information; and (f) human settlements.

29. A joint expert meeting on the use of remote sensing techniques was held in conjunction with the Regional Office of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and ACSAD. In addition, a training workshop on techniques on water catchments was held in Morocco in conjunction with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development; a training manual has been developed based on the results.

30. On the subject of cleaner industrial production and environmentally sound management of waste, general guidelines for permissible limits of industrial pollutants are being finalized after a series of expert workshops held in conjunction with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization.

31. In response to the need for increased public awareness and capacity-building, a series of projects have been undertaken, including a scientific symposium, an educational workshop on primary school curriculum development (in cooperation with the Arab League's Education, Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO)); and an Arabic-language newsletter jointly produced with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE).

32. The collection, screening and storage of accurate environmental information is a continuing challenge. Joint expert workshops have been held on the subject, as well as on the formulation of sustainable development indicators. These are first positive steps towards the establishment of an environmental database for the region. ACSAD and CAMRE are among collaborating centres in the production of the 1999 volume of UNEP's regionally based environment report, the *Global Environment Outlook*.

33. An expert meeting on the environmental management of urban and rural areas was held in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Organization of Arab Cities and the technical secretariat of the Council of Arab Housing and Reconstruction Ministers. The resulting report evaluates the state of the region's urban environment, and identifies the best means of coping with deteriorating conditions.

34. Overall, cooperation between UNEP and the League in implementing regional programmes for environmental protection and sustainable development has proved to be very successful, with tangible results. Regional awareness and participation have grown, and meaningful and useful regional infrastructures have evolved to meet the challenges being faced in this area.

G. United Nations Population Fund

35. With the ongoing process of preparation for the five-year review following the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) of the achievements towards ICPD goals, cooperation between LAS and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in coordination with ESCWA, has continued this year. UNFPA and LAS continue to explore additional ways to strengthen the capabilities of member countries for the formulation of enabling policies and strategies for successful implementation of programmes of action.

36. Accordingly, UNFPA is collaborating with LAS and ESCWA in the preparation of the Arab Population Conference on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. UNFPA and LAS also continued their cooperation in the area of data collection and analysis.

37. UNFPA support to LAS has continued, allowing the completion of a number of activities, including the evaluation of the five-year technical assistance to the Population Research Unit, which was established in 1975 following a recommendation by the Population Conference for Arab Countries.

38. 1998 marks the completion of the regional Pan-Arab Project on Maternal and Child Health (PAPCHILD) survey, which began in 1993 and was co-sponsored by LAS, the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Agencies (AGFUND), UNICEF, WHO and the International Planned Parenthood Foundation, with technical input from the United Nations. With the implementation of the Morocco study, the last of nine surveys, this regional programme was able to complement the basic maternal health and family planning modules with a new approach better suited to address the post-ICPD emerging concepts. The new instruments aim at collecting data on an expanded range of reproductive health aspects, including those pertaining to sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency syndrome/human immunodeficiency virus knowledge and behaviour. PAPCHILD has been and continues to be an instrumental input to policy development and evaluation for the countries in the region.

39. A more advanced approach to data collection was elaborated for the follow-on generation of the regional survey programme, the Pan Arab Project on Family Health (PAPFAM). PAPFAM incorporates, in addition to its

comprehensive reproductive health dimension, full-fledged qualitative studies addressing such areas as the quality of services, hospital-based morbidity and the linkage between various sources of reproductive health data.

40. UNFPA cooperation with LAS has so far been very fruitful. UNFPA will continue to strengthen this cooperation at an institutional level by involving all the relevant departments and units within the League to follow up and optimize the ability of Governments to implement the national action plans of United Nations conferences, and advocate the ratification and endorsement of international conventions by these Governments.

H. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

41. UNRWA, which directly provides essential education, health care, relief assistance and social services to 3.5 million registered Palestine refugees in the Middle East, has long enjoyed a close cooperative relationship with the Arab League. The Agency maintains contact with the Arab League secretariat at Cairo, and with the Permanent Observer of the Arab League in New York; participates in regular sectoral meetings organized by the Arab League; and seeks to foster exchanges between its officials and the Arab League secretariat at various levels and in various forums.

42. In the education sector, the seventh annual joint meeting between UNRWA and the Arab League Council of Educational Affairs for the Children of Palestine was held at Cairo in December 1997 to review education services offered to Palestine refugees in the host countries and issues facing the UNRWA education programme.

43. UNRWA's critical financial situation and the role of the Agency in the current context remained the subject of considerable discussion in Arab League forums during the period under review. The League reiterated its strong support for the Agency's humanitarian activities, concern over the repeated funding shortfalls faced by the Agency and their implications for the Palestine refugees and the host authorities, and the importance of increased contributions to the Agency by the international community. UNRWA appreciated the continuing efforts by the League, including by its Secretary-General, to assist the Agency in fund-raising initiatives.

44. UNRWA continued to benefit from the generous financial support of the Arab League and its continuing efforts to urge donors to increase voluntary contributions to the Agency. In 1997, Arab League member States contributed $13.5 million to the Agency's regular budget and extrabudgetary special assistance programmes. The Arab League Council of Ministers reaffirmed its resolution 4645 of 6 April 1997, in which it called upon Arab League member States to increase their contributions to the 1981 level of 7.73 per cent of the Agency's regular budget.

I. International Labour Organization

45. The International Labour Organization (ILO) maintained close cooperation with LAS, in particular with its specialized agency, the Arab Labour Organization (ALO), through joint activities and coordination of action related to issues of common interest.

46. During the period under review, joint ILO/ALO seminars were organized on the following topics: employment and emerging changes in the Arab region, and the role of trade unions in promoting social dialogue (Tunis, November 1997); mechanisms of vocational training curriculum development in the context of rapid changes in the labour market (Damascus, November 1997); the role of employers' organizations in dealing with economic and social changes at the regional and international levels (Dubai, November 1997); and the development of the role of employment offices (Beirut, May 1997).

47. Furthermore, the ILO has provided technical and financial assistance to the Regional Arab Programme for Labour Administration (RAPLA), which is now managed by ALO. The two institutions also collaborated in the implementation of an ILO/UNDP regional programme on the support of Arab migration policies, which was completed in March 1997.

J. World Health Organization

48. The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) continued its close collaboration with the League of Arab States (LAS), in particular the Council of Arab Ministers of Health. The WHO/EMRO Regional Director attended all the regular meetings of this Council. Various technical units in the Regional Office participated in the finalization of the Arab Strategy for Health Development and the Arab Pharmacopoeia, and attended several technical meetings organized by the technical secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Health. WHO continued close collaboration in several technical areas, some examples of which are described below.

49. WHO/EMRO continued its cooperation with LAS in various facets of reproductive, family and community health. The Gulf Family Health Survey, PAPCHILD and PAPFAM are excellent examples of close collaboration of the Regional Office with the League of Arab States, as well as other concerned agencies, such as AGFUND, UNFPA and UNICEF.

50. Close collaboration is ongoing with the Arab Labour Organization through providing necessary technical backstopping for developing databases on occupational diseases and work accidents in member States. Cooperation with LAS continues, particularly in matters of environmental impact of industrial activity and air quality guidelines. Working relations are ongoing through CAMRE.

K. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

51. The Cairo Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) maintains close cooperation with some of the specialized agencies of the Arab League, such as the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and ACSAD. Below are examples of this cooperation during the period under review.

52. The UNESCO Cairo Office cooperated with ALECSO and other partners in organizing the Seventh Regional Meeting of the Arab National Committees of the International Hydrological Programme and Workshop on Integration of Isotope Field Investigations into Water Projects in Water-Scarce Areas, held at Rabat from 8 to 12 September 1997.

53. Cooperating with ALECSO in its project to enhance the potential for the development of groundwater resources in the Eastern Sahara area using satellite radar images, the UNESCO Cairo Office held the annual meeting of a project on sand accumulation and groundwater in the Eastern Sahara at Cairo from 19 to 21 October 1997.

54. The UNESCO Cairo Office organized a regional meeting of the Arab Man and the Biosphere Network at Amman from 22 to 25 June 1997, which was co-sponsored by ACSAD.

55. In the field of culture, UNESCO is engaged in consultations with the general secretariat of the League of Arab States with a view to safeguarding the historic, religious and cultural monuments of the Old City of Jerusalem.

L. World Bank

56. The cooperation between the World Bank and LAS has continued to be close and productive. In addition to participating in the periodic general meetings on cooperation between the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States, the World Bank has specifically cooperated with LAS in the following areas: provision to LAS of World Bank research papers and other reports and publications; periodic consultation between World Bank staff and LAS staff on the preparation work for the launching of the Arab Free Trade Zone initiative; continued collaboration between the specialized agencies of the World Bank and LAS on important developmental and other sectoral issues; and participation by LAS senior staff in a comprehensive course prepared by the World Bank Economic Development Institute on global integration and the new trade agenda.

M. World Meteorological Organization

57. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has continued to maintain close cooperation and effective coordination in the field of meteorology and operational hydrology with LAS and its specialized organizations, in particular with ACSAD. WMO participates in and contributes to the meetings and activities of the LAS Permanent Committee on Meteorology and its various working groups.

58. In particular, WMO and LAS have sponsored a symposium on sand and dust storms at Damascus during September 1997; are developing a regional project in the Arab countries for the forecasting of sand and dust storms, with a total cost of about US$ 6 million; are planning the preparation of an Arabic climatic atlas; are cooperating in the development of an integrated system for the exchange of meteorological data and products between Arab countries; have completed the preparation of a comprehensive catalogue containing the meteorological telecommunication systems in all Arab countries; and are cooperating in the training of Palestinian meteorological personnel and in the establishment of a national meteorological service within the Palestinian National Authority.

59. WMO is cooperating with ACSAD in two regional projects in the Arab countries for capacity-building in water resources management and the development of geophysical geographical information systems.

N. International Fund for Agricultural Development

60. IFAD has continued to provide financial support to the specialized agencies of LAS. In 1997, IFAD began implementation of a technical assistance grant of US$ 1.15 million to the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), ACSAD and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) to provide technical backstopping to a number of ongoing IFAD-funded projects in the Arab League countries. Still ongoing is an IFAD grant of US$ 1 million for the Date Palm Research and Development Network Programme, which seeks to build knowledge of and strengthen regional scientific capacity for this traditional tree crop.

61. IFAD's newest initiative, now in the planning stages, is a collaborative effort with the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development (AFESD) to create a consultative group for poverty reduction in Arab States. This is in line with the recommendations of the 1997 United Nations-LAS general meeting, which called upon participants working in agriculture and rural development to improve mechanisms of cooperation and conclusion of formal cooperation. Through this consultative group, in which other interested donors and all concerned member States will be asked to participate, AFESD and IFAD hope to assist Governments in allocating resources and mobilizing assistance.

O. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

62. LAS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are pursuing efforts to strengthen their cooperation and coordination, primarily in areas relating to refugees and more generally in relation to global humanitarian issues of common interest. A draft cooperation agreement is being finalized, and will be submitted to both organizations for final approval.

63. Since 1996, contacts and consultations have continued between LAS and UNHCR to identify the most appropriate solutions to critical refugee situations in the Arab region. Cooperation between the two organizations involved other concerned parties and permitted the resolution of complex problems in a coordinated manner.

64. Efforts are also being made to further explore how collaborative activities could be jointly carried out by LAS and UNHCR, notably in the following areas: the organization of a regional conference on refugees and asylum seekers in the region; follow-up to previous initiatives taken in close collaboration with ALECSO to determine areas of cooperation in the field of educational assistance to refugees; exchange of expertise, documents and reports on respective policies and operations; and the convening of seminars and conferences on refugee law and basic principles of international protection.

IV. Sectoral meeting on trade and development between the United Nations and the League of Arab States

65. As recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/5 and in accordance with the decisions of the 1997 United Nations-LAS general meeting on cooperation, a sectoral meeting on trade and development between the United Nations and the League of Arab States was held at LAS headquarters at Cairo from 8 to 11 June 1998.

66. Representatives of the following bodies of the United Nations system and the League of Arab States participated in the meeting:

(a) United Nations system: ESCWA, UNDP, UNCTAD, WTO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations Secretariat (Department of Political Affairs);

(b) League of Arab States: ACSAD, ALO, BADEA, AFESD, the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development, AIDMO, AGFUND and the LAS Department of Political and International Affairs.

67. The following Arab countries took part in the meeting: Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Egypt, Morocco and Yemen. Representatives of the Palestine National Authority, the European Union, the Saudi Development Fund, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Islamic Development Bank, the Arab Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, the Arab Investors Union, the Union of Arab Banks, the Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, the Arab Council of Economic Union and the Arab Trade Financing Programme (Arab Monetary Fund) were also present.

68. The meeting was co-chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for International Political Affairs of the League of Arab States and the Executive Secretary of ESCWA. The participants discussed 11 working papers,

reviewed progress in cooperation in the field of trade and development, and made a number of recommendations for future action. Consultations on cooperation between the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the LAS Department of Political and International Affairs were held informally at the meeting.